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3           NOV 16 1999       SENATOR PECK: Thank you for affording me  
4 the chance to comment upon the Draft Environment Impact  
5 Statement for the Yucca Mountain project. By way of  
6 introduction, my name is Bob Peck. I'm a state senator  
7 from District 26, which is in Fremont County, which has  
8 been a major uranium producer for the past 35 years.

9                       My further credentials, if I have any, I'm  
10 a newspaper publisher. I've been publishing a daily  
11 newspaper now for a long time. I'm serving on the  
12 High-level Radioactive Waste Committee, National  
13 Conference of State Legislatures. I'm chairman of the  
14 Science Energy Environmental Sources Committee for  
15 NCSL.

16                      I've grown up, seen the uranium industries  
17 and all things radioactive all around us for a long  
18 time. I will say people in Fremont County have a higher  
19 level of comfort than others might.

20                      On my own, I've toured the LaHague  
21 reprocessing facility in France run by Cogema, and I've  
22 had the opportunity, through my other work, to tour  
23 nuclear power stations and on-site storage facilities.

24                      There's no point in dwelling on what might  
25 have been or what could have been, what should have

19

1       been. [Our situation today is what do we have here.  
2       Can Yucca Mountain survive the scrutiny of Congress,  
3       the public, and the President.

4               It could if there weren't such an  
5       irrational, emotional anxiety about radiation. The  
6       fears of radioactivity allows the magnification of all  
7       other "what ifs," what if earthquake, volcanoes, flood,  
8       transportation accidents, et cetera.

9               I say perhaps irrational reaction in that  
10      in Cheyenne, the capitol of our state, which is the  
11      home of Fort Francis E. Warren, we are surrounded by  
12      1,000 nuclear warheads, multiple hydrogen bombs on the  
13      tip of these missiles, and these missiles roll up and  
14      down the streets of Cheyenne and across the Nebraska  
15      and Wyoming plains there and nobody even looks up. ]

16              I wish more of you could have a chance to  
17      go to a nuclear power plant and stand up on the balcony  
18      and look down into the pool, and there the rods are,  
19      nothing protecting you from the rods and radioactivity  
20      but water. I'd say that soil has about the same  
21      effect, although it's not quite as dense as water.

22              [ So I guess my question is, Is there any  
23      way we can alleviate the radioactive anxiety which  
24      grips the country? I'd say perhaps we can. ]

25              I'd like to cite one specific example. A

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20

1     few years ago we made our first visit to the Surrey dry  
2     cask storage of Virginia Electric Power. We drove up  
3     to the Virginia plant and we were 100 yards away and  
4     behind a barbed wire fence. Sort of made us all  
5     uneasy. We didn't want to get too close to that stuff.

6             Went back a couple three years later, the  
7     whole pad was completely filled with canisters. This  
8     time they let us go out, count them, feel them, put the  
9     Geiger counter on them, measure the radioactivity  
10    escaping from them. And someone accused me of doing  
11    the foolish thing of allowing my picture to be taken  
12    hugging one of the casks, which was done in the spirit  
13    of horseplay.

14            We are involved in the national process  
15    which allows for public participation that provides an  
16    opportunity for masterful manipulation. We have  
17    attorneys who will take any side of the issue, and  
18    unfortunately we also have scientists who will take any  
19    side of an issue, and try to give you a scientific  
20    basis for their conclusion.

21            I'd tell you that Yucca Mountain has been  
22    studied like no other place on earth. We also know  
23    you'll have to do it all over again because every  
24    possible flaw and every possible fissure, anything  
25    about volcanism or seismic probability, the protesters

~~21~~

1 are going to say, Well, we got to recheck that.

2 It's going to be an uphill fight. Even  
3 the nomenclature is against you. If you look at the  
4 names around the Yucca Mountain, you have Jackass  
5 Flats, Devil's Hole. We have Skull Mountain and all  
6 sorts of names from the old gold mining deals here.

3 7 The transportation opponents have coined  
8 the marvelous phrase, Mobile Chernobyl. It rhymes, but  
9 has no reason behind it.

10 I'd like to talk about the transportation.  
11 I-80 runs across the southern parts of Wyoming. We  
12 think this is a lot of shipment of materials. I don't  
13 want to minimize the hazards of nuclear waste, but last  
14 year Wyoming shipped 315 million tons of coal out of  
15 state. There's a coal train leaving or arriving in  
16 Wyoming every 15 minutes, 24 hours a day.

17 We also ship almost a million tons of soda  
18 ash by truck from the Green River Bay to the Burlington  
19 Railroad there.

20 The image I like to think of the nuclear  
21 stuff here, you see a coal train running down the  
22 track. If you'd had to wait at a crossing, you  
23 know the suckers are pretty long, 110 cars with 10,000  
24 tons of coal. The same energy equivalent is contained  
25 in one barrel, in a 55-gallon drum.

22

1 I tell you we should take action now. If  
2 the delays we have seen at the Waste Isolation Pilot  
3 Plant at Carlsbad are any indication, we can expect the  
4 opponents of the Yucca Mountain plant facility to  
5 probably delay this process, in my opinion, from 30 to  
6 50 years. I think the time frame is probably entirely  
7 unrealistic considering the heat generated from the  
8 opposition.

9 I think in the interim the DOE should turn  
10 to the private sector to some extent as they have in  
11 the development of the shipping containers. I think  
12 they should allow the licensing of private, independent  
13 spent fuel storage facilities, and figure out a way to  
14 let them have access to the nuclear waste funds. It  
15 will save the DOE a lot of money in the process, and be  
16 much less expensive than the cost of litigation in the  
17 lawsuits which are ultimately going to lose.

1 cont. 18 My conclusions are, let's keep studying,  
19 testing, licensing, and then build Yucca Mountain. My  
20 community had the benefits of 35 years of the uranium  
21 activity, and the nation and world has had the benefit  
22 of nuclear power for 40 years.

23 We need to explain and educate over and  
24 over, radiation is natural, measurable, and can be  
25 contained, can be blocked. We need to remind people

1 cont.

1 the safeguards in the nuclear industry are redundant,  
2 they're in place. We should document all that's been  
3 avoided by use of nuclear power as opposed to carbon  
4 fuels.

5 I'm not trying to knock the great coal  
6 industry of the United States. The nuclear record of  
7 safety is almost impeccable. It's the standard of all  
8 other industrial activities.

9 I recall my tour of the USS George  
10 Washington nuclear power carrier, landing on the  
11 carrier, taking off with the aid of catapult, went down  
12 and stood right next to the reactor in this nuclear  
13 aircraft carrier, then went to a nuclear submarine  
14 besides.

15 The power in that nuclear reactor was  
16 sufficient, but the floating city of six or seven  
17 thousand people on that floating airport didn't have to  
18 refuel except for every 35 years. We need to fold in  
19 the defense component in the urgency for dealing with  
20 the waste issues.

1 cont.

21 Licensing and building Yucca is vital to  
22 our national interest and international goals. I say  
23 keep at it; we'll do it. Keep up the flow of positive  
24 answers.

25 I'll leave my expanded remarks for the

1 record, and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

2 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Our next speaker

3 is Robert Jefferson.